

# Razihi language

**Razihi** (Rāziḥī) is a South Semitic language spoken by at least 62,900 people in the vicinity of Mount Razih (Jabal Razih) in the far northwestern corner of Yemen.<sup>[3]</sup> Along with Faifi, it is the only surviving descendant of the Old South Arabian languages.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Speakers

Razihi is spoken on Jabal Razih, a mountain lying west of the town Sa'dah, whose highest summit, Jabal Hurum, is 2,790 m (9,150 ft) high. The population of Jabal Razih was approximately 25,000 in the 1970s and is estimated to be much more now.<sup>[4]</sup> The number of Razihi speakers is reported by *Ethnologue* to have been 62,900 in 2004.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Phonology

Razihi exhibits wide-scale assimilation of coronal consonants in words. Unlike in Arabic, this is not restricted to obstruents but includes sonorants, most significantly /n/,<sup>[6]</sup> as can be seen in words such as *ssān* "man" and *ssānah*, "woman", which are cognate words of Arabic *insān* "person". Nasal consonant assimilation was a feature of both Ancient North Arabian and Old South Arabian but is not found in any Arabic dialect. Razihi also has a large number of non-Arabic basic vocabulary items, prepositions and other grammatical forms.<sup>[3]</sup>

In contrast to Yemeni Arabic dialects, Razihi does not ever allow word-final consonant clusters (-CC).<sup>[6]</sup>

Syncope, or the removal, of the high vowels /i/ and /u/ is a common phenomenon in Razihi:

- *wāḥdah* – 'one f.' (/wāḥid + ah/)
- *wiṣlū* – 'they m. arrived' (/wiṣil + ū/)
- *gibḏūhim* – 'they m. seized them m.' (/gibiḏ + ū + him/)<sup>[6]</sup>

In Classical Arabic:

- š corresponds to Razihi /ʃ/ and its emphatic correlate.
- ḏ corresponds to general Yemeni /ð/ in recent words but /tʃ/ in older words.<sup>[3]</sup>

## References

1. Razihi (<https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/rzh/>) at *Ethnologue* (19th ed., 2016)

2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Jabal Razih" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/lanuoid/id/jaba1234>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute

Razihi	
Jabal Razih	
<span><i>Rāziḥī</i></span>	
Native to	Yemen
Native speakers	62,900 (2004) <sup>[1]</sup>
Language family	Afro-Asiatic <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Semitic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>South<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Western<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Old South Arabian<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Razihi</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	rzh
Glottolog	jaba1234 ( <a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/lanuoid/id/jaba1234">http://glottolog.org/resource/lanuoid/id/jaba1234</a> ) <sup>[2]</sup>

for the Science of Human History.

3. Watson, Glover-Stalls, Al-razihi, & Weir (2006), "The language of Jabal Rāziḥ: Arabic or something else?", *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 36:35–41
  4. Edzard, Lutz; Retsö, Jan (2006). *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II: Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 4th-5th November 2005* (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=xSf4yO1d7-cC&pg=PA40>). Otto Harrassowitz Verlag. p. 40. ISBN 9783447054416.
  5. "Rāziḥī" (<https://www.ethnologue.com/language/rzh>). *Ethnologue*. Retrieved 2017-11-12.
  6. Edzard, Lutz; Retsö, Jan (2006). *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II: Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 4th-5th November 2005* (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=xSf4yO1d7-cC&pg=PA44>). Otto Harrassowitz Verlag. p. 44. ISBN 9783447054416.
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